

THE LUXURY COLLECTION®

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IN CONVERSATION WITH
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AT FAIRMONT, JAIPUR

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AMSTERDAM

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EXCELLENCE HYBRID

THE IMPERIAL -
AN ART TOUR OF THE
COLONIAL HOTEL

the magazine for the connoisseur of luxury



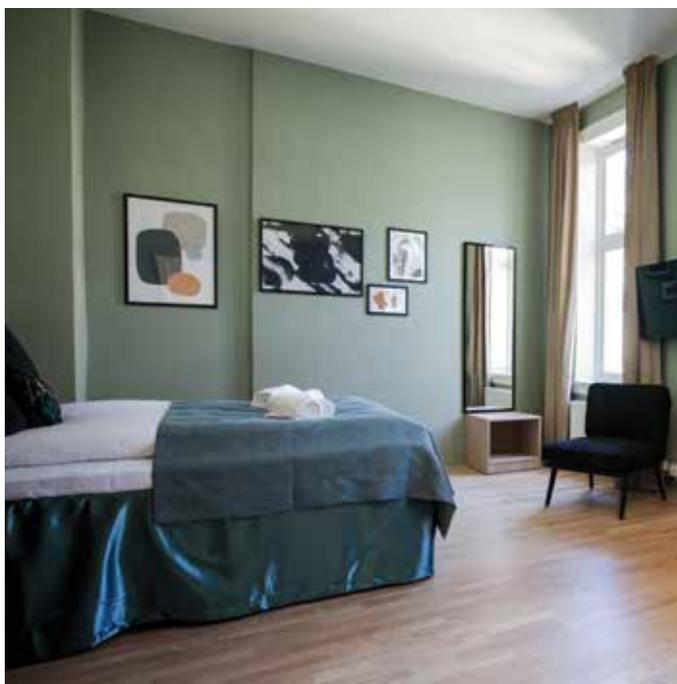
Awesome Oslo!

The Norwegian capital is symbolic of the Scandinavian flair for design and style

- By Aruna Rathod



After checking into my warm, comfortable Frogner apartment I had a cup of organic coffee and charged out to soak in the beauty of the Norwegian capital. I was equipped with the Oslo Card, as it's an excellent way to get around in the city - transport is included - and entrance to most museums is free once you have the card.



SCANDINAVIAN HOSPITALITY

After landing in Oslo, I checked into Frogner Apartments at Arbins 3, one of the properties that has been recently renovated and refurbished. With the self check-in machine, it was easy to get the swipe keys after just punching in the booking number. The delightful apartment, on the fourth floor, was done up in Scandinavian colours, with large windows that brought in plenty of light – the walls were an olive green shade. Adding to the beauty and utility of the room were a dark blue sofa with two cushions, a queen-sized bed, a reading lamp, a table for four to dine on – and the apartment had a tiny kitchenette equipped with a kettle, refrigerator, dish washer, microwave oven and plenty of cutlery! The bathroom was chic in black and white with matt-black fittings. I even cooked a couple of my meals in the apartment since it had everything needed for heating, frying, serving and dining in style – right upto Champagne glasses! The Frogner apartment symbolised Scandinavia's flair for smart utility with great style.

Offering plenty of choices in Oslo, Frogner House has apartments in 15 locations across the Norwegian capital, each embodying Frogner's philosophy of 'home when you're not'. Whether it's a 3-night short break or a 30-day long haul in Oslo, Frogner has just the perfect fit for every leisure and business traveller.



AKER BRYGE AND AROUND

My apartment location at Arbins 5 was just a few metres from one of the finest neighbourhoods of Oslo - the lively and vibrant Akker Brygge promenade. A stylish area, it has some fancy restaurants, pubs and shopping streets, so you can either browse or walk down the pier watching the sea gulls, boats of all kinds – cruise liners, sail boats, yachts, Ruter boats, and the sea. I just sat on a wooden bench in the cool breezy setting, taking in the atmosphere, and spotted the Akkerhus Fort on the opposite side. There are boats that take you around the Oslo fjords.

Some very interesting buildings are located near Akker Brygge and all are within walking distance – the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art with its dramatic architecture, the Nobel Peace Centre, and the Oslo City Hall which is a maroon coloured structure. It's easy to spend half a day around the area.

And I got to know that you could also come to Oslo by private boat as the Akker Brygge Marina's guest harbour has 50 spaces. So as the sun went down at about 11 pm or so (which is a celebration in Scandinavia), I returned to the comfort of my cosy Frogner Apartment.



OF CULTURE AND HISTORY

Day 2 was devoted to the museums on Bygdøy island. The Norwegian Museum of Cultural History opens at 10 am, while the Viking Ship Museum opens at 9 am. So I proceeded there early to get the most out of my day. It's a cute museum, very compact with a cross-shaped interior, with four ships and a new addition – an interactive film that takes one on a journey into the history of the Viking ships. What struck me was that the Vikings ships were huge, wide and flat – totally crafted out of wood. All the ships were once used as ocean-going vessels and were later drawn up on land and used as burial ships for kings and queens. I took a stop at the souvenir store which had plenty of interesting souvenirs like chess board with Viking warriors, Viking beads, and falcon bells, each offering a slice of Viking history.

Next was the Cultural History museum which is an open air museum and that's where I saw a restored Stave Church (from the 12th century) and it was magnificent. Crafted totally out of wood, it has a unique structure of towering wood pinnacles. The re-created old town has a tobacco and fruit shop, a tavern and a bank. It's a great spot for tourists and children to learn about Norwegian tradition and culture.



CITY TOUR

A must-visit in Oslo is the Vigeland Park, where sculptor Gustav Vigeland has made more than 200 nude human sculptures that are placed strategically in the park, and the highlight is the Ovelisk made of human figures that towers into the sky. The sculptures depict various stages of human life.

The Barcode Buildings are tall, slick, stylish and in a row, so one can take a walk down the financial district, admiring the unique architecture and facade of each building. At the end of the street is the majestic Opera House that looks great from distance and gets increasingly magnificent as you approach it. The harbour beyond with the ships, boats and sail boats adds a deep dimension to the landscape.

If you want to shop, take the bus to Oslo Central Station where you can spend a few hours if not more at the Storo Storsenter. The shopping street at Karl Johans Gate is also great with its mix of high-end stores, cafes, pubs and history! On the street's highest point, Egertorget, you can see the Royal Palace on the horizon and next to you will be the Stortinget (Parliament House). Also in the vicinity is the National Theatre of Oslo, as well as the cathedral.

